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He was born in 1387, at Fiesole, a beautiful town situated on a hill overlooking Florence; and in 1407, being then twenty, and already skilled in the art of painting, particularly miniature illuminations of Missals and choral books, he entered the Dominican convent of St. Mark, at Florence, and took the habit of the order. It is not known exactly under whom he studied; but he is said to have been taught by Starnina, the best colorist of that time. The rest of his long life of seventy years presents only one unbroken tranquil stream of placid contentment and pious labors. Except on one occasion, when called to Rome by Pope Nicholas V. to paint in the Vatican, he never left his convent, and then only yielded to the express command of the pontiff. While he was at Rome the Archbishopric of Florence became vacant, and the pope, struck by the virtue and learning of Angelico, and the simplicity and sanctity of his life, offered to install him in that dignity, one of the greatest in the power of the papal see to bestow. Angelico refused it from excess of modesty, pointing out at the same time to the notice of the pope a brother of his convent as much more worthy of the honor, and by his active talents more fitted for the office. The pope listened to his recommendation; Frate Antonio was raised to the see, and became celebrated as the best Archbishop of Florence that had been known for two centuries. Meantime Angelico pursued his vocation in the still precincts of his quiet monastery, and, being as assiduous as he was devout, he painted a great number of pictures, some in distemper and on a small scale, to which he gave all the delicacy and finish of miniature; and in the churches of Florence many large frescoes with numerous figures nearly life-size, as full of grandeur as of beauty. He painted only sacred subjects, and never for money. Those who wished for any work of his hand were obliged to apply to the prior of the convent, from whom Angelico received with humility the order or the permission to execute it, and thus the brotherhood was at once enriched by his talent and edified by his virtue. To Angelico the art of painting a picture devoted to religious purposes was an act of religion, for which he prepared himself by fasting and prayer, imploring on bended knees the benediction of heaven on his work. He then, under the impression that he had obtained the blessing he sought, and glowing with what might truly be called inspiration, took up his pencil, and, mingling with his earnest and pious humility a singular species of self-uplifted enthusiasm, he could never be persuaded to alter his first draught or composition, believing that which he had done was according to the will of God, and could not be changed for the better by any afterthought of his own or suggestion from others. All the works left by Angelico are in harmony with this gentle, devout, enthusiastic spirit. They are not remarkable for the usual merits of the Florentine school.

They are not addressed to the taste of connoisseurs, but to the faith of worshippers. Correct drawing of the human figure could not be expected from one who regarded the exhibition of the undraped form as a sin. In the learned distribution of light and shade, in the careful imitation of nature in the details, and in variety of expression, many of his contemporaries excelled him; but none approached him in that poetical and religious fervor which he threw into his heads of saints and Madonnas. Power is not the characteristic of Angelico. Wherever he has had to express energy of action, or bad or angry pas-

sions, he has generally failed. In his pictures of the Crucifixion and the Stoning of St. Stephen, the executioners and the rabble are feeble and often ill-drawn, and his fallen angels and devils are anything but devilish; while, on the other hand, the pathos of suffering, of pity, of divine resignation—the expression of ecstatic faith and hope, or serene contemplation—have never been placed before us as in his pictures. In the heads of his young angels, in the purity and beatitude of his female saints, he has never been excelled—not even by Raphael.

The principal works of Angelico are the frescoes in the church of his own convent of St. Mark, at Florence, in the church of Santa Maria Novella, and at Rome in the chapel of Nicholas V., in the Vatican. His small easel pictures are numerous, and to be found in most of the foreign collections; though, unhappily, the writer can point out none that are accessible in England. There is one in the Louvre, of surpassing beauty. The subject is the Coronation of the Virgin Mary by her Son the Redeemer, in the presence of saints and angels. It represents a throne under a rich Gothic canopy, to which there is an ascent by nine steps. On the highest kneels the Virgin, veiled, her hands crossed on her bosom. She is clothed in a red tunic, a blue robe over it, and a royal mantle with a rich border flowing down behind. The features are most delicately lovely, and the expression of the face full of humility and adoration. Christ, seated on the throne, bends forward, and is in the act of placing the crown on her head. On each side are twelve angels, who are playing a heavenly concert with guitars, tambourines, trumpets, viols, and other musical instruments. Lower than these, on each side, are forty holy personages of the Old and New Testament; and at the foot of the throne kneel several saints, male and female, among them St. Catherine with her wheel, St. Agnes with her lamb, and St. Cecilia crowned with flowers. Beneath the principal picture there is a row of seven small ones, forming a border, and representing various incidents in the life of St. Dominic. The whole measures about seven and a half feet high by six feet in width. It is painted in distemper; the glories round the heads of the sacred personages are in gold, the colors are the most delicate and vivid imaginable, and the ample draperies have the long folds which recall the school of Giotto; the gayety and harmony of the tints, the expression of the various heads, the divine rapture of the angels, with their air of immortal youth, and the devout reverence of the other personages, the unspeakable serenity and beauty of the whole composition, render this picture worthy of the celebrity it has enjoyed for more than four centuries. It was painted by Frate Angelico for the church of St. Dominic, at Fiesole, where it remained till the beginning of the present century. How obtained it does not appear, but it was purchased by the French government in 1812, and exhibited for the first time in the long gallery of the Louvre in 1815. It is now placed in the gallery of drawings at the upper end. A very good set of outlines were engraved and published at Paris, with explanatory notes by A. W. Schlegel; and to those who have no opportunity of seeing the original these would convey some faint idea of the composition, and of the exquisite and benign beauty of the angelic heads.

It is a curious circumstance that the key of the chapel of Pope Nicholas V., in the Vatican, in which Angelico painted some of his most beauti-

ful frescoes, was for two centuries lost, and few persons were aware of their existence, fewer still set any value on them. In 1769 those who wished to see them were obliged to enter by a window.

Fra Giovanni Angelico da Fiesole died at Rome, in 1455, and is buried there in the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva.

[From the North American Review.]

## PHILOSOPHY OF THE FINE ARTS.

BY ERNEST VON LASAULX,

Notwithstanding their creative activity as an artistic people, the Greeks did not philosophize deeply about art. Indeed, they were habitually inexact in all their classifications. Aristotle, for example, makes zoology, medicine, &c., branches of philosophy, and put them in the same category with metaphysics. As regards the arts, he assumes that they are all imitations, and from this stand-point inquires, first, by what means the imitation is produced (form, color, tone, or word); secondly, what objects are imitated (emotions, actions, &c.); and, thirdly, in what manner these objects are imitated. But he does not inform us what particular arts he would place under these several heads. He lays the foundation of a classification, but rears no superstructure upon it. Cicero divides the arts into silent (*quasi mutæ artes*), and speaking (*oratio et lingua*); the former are sculpture and painting, the latter are poetry and eloquence. Quintilian, applying to the arts the Aristotelian classification of the sciences, throws them into three groups: the *theoretical* (astronomy and philosophy); the *practical* (strategy, oratory, and dancing); and the *poetical*, comprising architecture, sculpture, and painting. These latter he also calls creative arts (*artes effectivæ*). In like manner the Neoplatonic Plotinus divides them, first, into imitative arts, sculpture, painting, and dancing, which imitate forms and motions, and music, which imitates the innate harmonies of the human soul; secondly, the practical arts, architecture and carpentry, which are expressions of the indwelling symmetry of the soul; and, thirdly, the theoretical arts, or those which are of a more ideal nature, such as geometry, poetry, oratory, and, highest of all, philosophy. The vice of these classifications obviously springs from the vagueness of the Greek and Latin terms which we are forced to translate by "the arts."

If now we turn to modern art-criticism, we equally arbitrary and unsatisfactory. Dante (*De Monarchia*, II.) remarks that art is conditioned by three things,—the spirit of the artist, the instrument which he employs, and the material in which he works; but he makes no distribution of the arts under this general principle. Kant (*kritik der Urtheilskraft*, § 51) makes expression the basis of his classification. First, the speaking arts, poetry and eloquence; the latter of these treats a business of the understanding as if it were a free play of the imagination, whereas the former conducts a free play of the imagination, as if it were merely a business of the understanding. Secondly, the formative arts, of which there are two subdivisions, those which are expressed in accordance with the truth of the senses (*Sinnenwahrheit*), comprising architecture and sculpture (*die Plastik*), and those which rest on an illusion of the senses (*Sinnenschein*), including painting and landscape-gardening. Thirdly, the art of the beautiful play of the emotions, or music. Sodger

(*Aesthetik*, p. 257) assumes five fine arts, which he divides into two groups, viz. Poesy and Art (*Kunst*). The former he regards as the universal art, embracing in itself all the others. The latter he subdivides into symbolical (architecture and sculpture) and allegorical (painting and music). Hegel looks at art from different points of view, and gives a classification as seen from each. Historically considered he distinguishes three principal forms: the symbolical, or the art-panteism of the Orient, the classical art of the Greeks and Romans, and the romantic art of the Christian nations of Western Europe. Again he speaks of the external art (architecture), the objective art (sculpture), and the subjective arts (painting, music, and poetry). Or if we consider the sense to which the art appeals, we have architecture, sculpture, and painting which appeal to the eye; music, which is addressed to the ear; and poetry, which speaks to the imagination. Or, finally, distributing them into two groups, we have architecture and sculpture, which present the objective, and painting, music, and poetry, which express the innerness (*Innerlichkeit*) of the subjective. Cousin places painting above sculpture and music, because it is more pathetic than the former and clearer than the latter, and expresses the human soul in a greater richness and variety of its sentiments. Poetry he calls the art *par excellence*. Architecture and gardening he puts together in one category, as the least free and lowest of the arts. It seems to us, however, more natural, following Kant's distribution, to associate gardening with painting, inasmuch as it is governed by the laws of perspective, and is picturesque rather than architectural. Ferguson divides the arts into three classes,—thenic, æsthetic, and phonetic. The technic culminate in upholstery, the æsthetic in music, and the phonetic in eloquence. On this basis he erects a labyrinthian superstructure through whose "wandering mazes" we have no disposition to conduct our readers.

It must be obvious to every one that all these classifications are more or less determined by *a priori* considerations, instead of being deduced from the nature and genesis of the arts and the law that controls their development. Every classification is imperfect, in so far as it is artificial. It is essential, therefore, to pursue a new method, to throw aside dogmatism and appeal to history, to study the arts in the process of their growth, and to adopt the arrangement into which we find them drawn by their natural affinities. The proper application of this method would render it necessary to trace the rise and progress of each art, and to show how the varying forces of nature, civilization, and social life have operated in developing and modifying man's artistic faculty; but this discussion is too broad for our present limits, and we must rest satisfied with a mere statement of the results to which such an investigation would lead.

By the fine arts, then, we mean architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry, and prose. These may be divided into two equal groups. The first three, architecture, sculpture, and painting, address themselves to the eye, speaking to it in the dialect of form; they may therefore be called the arts of formal representation,—formative or imaging arts. The last three, music, poetry, and prose, address themselves to the ear, and may be termed the arts of oral representation, or speaking arts. We have enumerated them in the order of their logical relations and of their

chronological development. The first of the fine arts in point of time, and the lowest of a means of expression, is architecture; the last in time and the highest in expressiveness is prose. This classification corresponds to the historical growth of Grecian art. Art is originally an emanation of religious feeling. It springs from man's spiritual wants, which first seek expression in a rude symbolism. No pre-Hellenic people ever advanced beyond these religious beginnings of art. Such are the colossal temples of India, filled with gigantic images, monstrous in shape and yet every limb and lineament symbolical of certain divine attributes; also the monumental architecture of Egypt, massive and gloomy pyramids, obelisks emblematic of sacrificial flames, and all those stupendous structures that fringe the Nile from the Nubian desert to the Mediterranean. The Greeks were the first to idealize this symbolism and inspire it with a new principle, to modify it by intellectual and æsthetic culture, and melt it into a new metamorphosis, in which the sentiment of beauty blended with that of religion.

The six arts of which we have made mention rise one above the other, in a regular series; sculpture is higher than architecture, painting is higher than sculpture, music stands above painting, poetry above music, and prose is the highest art of all. It will be observed, also, that in the exact ratio of the increase of the spiritual content of these arts there is a decrease of materiality in the form. In nature we see a progress from the inorganic to the organic, from organogens to living organisms, from the general substances and elementary bodies of chemistry to the special phenomena of physics, from the coral to the plant, from the plant to the animal, and from the animal to man; each "striving to ascend, and ascending in its striving." The stone or the metal, in its highest form of crystal, mimics the delicacy of the flower; the flower, with its organic functions and motions and the variegated plumage of its petals, is assimilated to the butterfly that hovers on free wings above it; and in the social life and cunning instincts of the bee, the bird, the ant, and the spider are typically foreshadowed the intelligence and moral affections of man. Each of these in the rising scale of creation is the realization of that which is below it, and the mute prophecy of that which is above it. In like manner there is a progress in art from architecture to sculpture, from sculpture to painting, from painting to music, from music to poetry, and from poetry to prose. All these have their root in a common sentiment; they are all manifestations of religious feeling working through the imagination, and there is no instance on record of supreme excellence in art, except in times of religious enthusiasm or among a people distinguished for religious sensibility. Art first built a temple to the gods, consecrated it with their images, beautified it with pictures of sacred scenes out of their lives, celebrated their praises in music and poetry, and, finally, recorded the fact and philosophized about it in prose. Thus in all its forms and creations it is but an expression of this first, deepest, and holiest emotion of the human soul.

The theory enunciated by Vitruvius and recently by Hope, and tacitly assumed by Ruskin, that architecture had its origin in the rude efforts of man to shelter himself from the inclemencies of the sky, is not only false in principle, but at variance with fact. The hut of the shepherd, the tent of the nomad, the wigwam of the savage, and the

cave of the troglodyte, which have been regarded as so many germs of architecture, have really no more connection with it than the den of the tiger or the lair of the wolf. It was from the impulse of religious feeling, and not under the stimulus of physical wants, that man became an architect. The temple is older than the house. Indeed, such a thing as domestic architecture was unknown previous to the Roman Empire. According to the old Hebrew legend, Adam built an altar to God before he put a roof over his own head. The earliest and rudest structures now existing on the face of the earth were dedicated to the deities.

Much misconception will be avoided if we remember that a temple is not necessarily an edifice. It may be its accidental form, but does not constitute its distinctive character. It is essentially, as the etymology implies, (τέμνειν, to cut off or set apart,) a consecrated spot, like that where Noah offered sacrifice when he issued from the ark. The hollow cedar containing a rudely carved image of the Arcadian goddess, of which Pausanias (VIII. 13, 2) speaks, was as much a temple as the Parthenon or the Pantheon. Indeed, the first temples seem to have been hollow trees in which images were placed: the Dodonean Jupiter dwelt in a beech, the Ephesian Diana in an elm, and it was not until 600 B. C. that she was honored with a temple in marble; and among the Germanic nations of Northern Europe, we find that the three gods of the ancient Prussians were worshipped in a sacred oak at Romove.

[To be continued.]

#### MUSICAL GOSSIP.

*Le Menestrel* and *La France Musicale* give elaborate and laudatory notices of the renovated opera, by Gluck—"Alceste"—which had so long and eagerly been expected at L'Académie. Its preparation had been admirably superintended by Hector Berlioz, and with the artists there available, that opera's grand orchestra and chorus, with superb *mise en scene* to insure brilliant visual effects, the natural result for such grand music fitly interpreted, was an immense success. Marie Battu satisfied Parisian criticism as Alceste, so thoroughly, as to elicit from their pens high encomiums. Villaret, as Admète, David as Grand Pretre, shared liberally in their praises of excellence, and L'Académie is pronounced by them superlative in all requisites for the production of great works in adequate style.

Victor Masse's new opera was parceled out to L'Opera Comique artists in mid October. Coudere is the Brigadier Cleophas, Montaubry is Emile, Bitterman is done by St. Foy, Prilleuse does Benito, Leroy does Frederic, Mlle. Girard is the Catarina, Mlle. Roze enacts Therese, and Mlle. Revilly a Colonel. This new opera is called "le Fils du Brigadier," and comes out January 15th, and his "Voyage en Chine" goes on mean time.

Adelina Patti was announced for Annetta—"Crispino e la Comare"—at Les Italiens, but indisposition prevented that rare feast being enjoyed by dilettanti and critics.

Capoul is still desired for Romeo in Gounod's new opera, and shrewd devices started to obtain that result, despite his engagements in other theatres, which are positive.

Irma Marie, from the Chatelet, has been engaged for three years at Le Lyrique.

The authors of "La Belle Helene" and "Barbe-Bleue" have another performing at le Palais Royal, called "la Vie Parisienne," which gracefully pressages "Haroun al Raschid" at the Chatelet, and Des Bouffes Parisiens have a new comic opera in two acts, by Ymbert, in which Ugalde shines especially bright.